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ABSTRACT

An overview of adult learning disabilities is presented with an emphasis on the most recent developments in the field. Areas discussed are definition, characteristics, current literature, and program design. Various definitions of a learning disabled adult are identified and the problems associated with these definitions are considered. The social/emotional, academic, and processing characteristics are listed, with the focus on the manner in which these characteristics interrelate. An annotated bibliography lists sources in the following six areas: college programs, case studies, basic skills programs, adult basic education programs, research, and longitudinal studies. A description of one community college program is summarized, with three major phases of the programs discussed (a core of remedial/developmental courses, an integrated learning laboratory, and a series of inservice workshops). (Author/SBH)

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AN OVERVIEW OF ADULT LEARNING DISABILITIES

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Abstract

An overview of adult learning disabilities is presented with an emphasis on the most recent developments in this field. The areas discussed are definition, characteristics, current literature and program design. Various definitions of a learning disabled adult are identified and the problems associated with these definitions are presented. The social/emotional, academic, and processing characteristics are listed, with the focus on the manner in which these characteristics interrelate.

A review of the current literature which resulted in an annotated bibliography lists sources in the following six areas: college programs, case studies, basic skills programs, Adult Basic Education programs, research and longitudinal studies. A description of one community college program is summarized, with the three major phases of the program discussed: a core of remedial/developmental courses, an integrated learning laboratory, and a series of in-service workshops.

It is anticipated that this overview will provide instructors with the background to develop programs to assist learning disabled adults on their campuses.

Introduction

Take a moment now to recall an adult you believe to be learning disabled. Does this adult have difficulty remembering information from one day to the next? Does the adult frequently respond to questions with totally unrelated statements? If so, this adult may be learning disabled.

As you read through the overview of adult learning disabilities presented in this article, continue to think of this adult. This overview discusses the most recent developments in the definition, characteristics, current literature, and program design related to the learning disabled adult. It is intended that this overview provide you with the background to assist the learning disabled adult on your campus.

Definition of a Learning Disabled Adult

A careful examination of the literature reveals that the current definitions used by professionals in the field of learning disabilities do not accurately describe the learning disabled adult. An analysis discloses that many of these definitions are derived from descriptions of the learning disabled child. Coles (1979) indicates that the learning disabled adult has a normal IQ, exhibits no hyperactivity, and has few gross physical or neurological problems. Parker (1978) states that the major manifestations of learning disabilities in the adult appear as disorders of input, output, memory and attention and emotional instability. These characteristics are different than those associated with the learning disabled child.

In 1978 Parker (1978) conducted a survey of all professionals in the field of learning disabilities throughout the state of

Indiana and in all Adult and Community Education State Departments in the United States. This survey established that the major component of the definitions used by these professionals was listed as a: dysfunction in processing information, difficulty in acquiring basic skills, difficulty in learning by traditional means, failure to retain information, and difficulty processing language. The conclusion of this study verified that these professionals were using different definitions that inadequately described the characteristics of the learning disabled adult.

The use of different definitions by professionals in the field of learning disabilities has contributed to the existing disparity in the statistics describing the number of learning disabled adults. These percentages include: 3% among high school adults, 15% - 20% among general and 60% among the adults in the Adult Basic Education classes surveyed in Ohio.

The discrepencies in the definitions and the statistics have created a climate of concern and dissatisfaction among the professionals. Brown (1979) states that a new definition will soon emerge which will incorporate the characteristics of most learning problems. The learning disabled adult will be defined as any adult unable to learn regardless of cause. The exception will be the adult diagnosed as mentally retarded.

Characteristics of the Learning Disabled Adult

Research concerning the characteristics of the learning disabled adult is limited. However, it is possible to uncover characteristics by looking through the literature. These characteristics can be separated into the areas of academic, social/emotional, and processing. Remember that the characteristics of a learning disabled

adult do not occur in isolation but appear in patterns unique to each individual. For example, one learning disabled adult with a reading problem may require the whole-word remediation technique while another adult with the identical problem may require a structured phonics approach. It often requires a skillful teacher to unravel an individual's characteristics since the learning disabled adult has had many years to perfect his coping skills.

Academic characteristics are discussed thoroughly in the literature. One notable trend is that learning disabled adults often perform poorly in some subjects and excel in others. Some experts use this discrepency to differentiate these adults from others with problems related to lack of motivation or mental retardation. In reading, the characteristics include confusion with words, ability to state the words but not to comprehend meaning, and inability to read for inferences. In writing some common characteristics are immature handwriting, spelling errors, rigid writing patterns, and consistent difficulties with organization such as the inability to identify the main idea or the supporting details. Speech characteristics are illustrated by adults who give monosyllabic answers. Adults who are unable to follow directions illustrate a common listening problem. Thinking problems revolve around the difficulty to organize or remember material. In mathematics two of the more common characteristics include the inability to remember a mathematical process from one day to the next and the inability to identify problem solving patterns. Learning disabled adults often have poor work habits including poor organization of time, ideas, papers, notes or homework. Some of the adults compensate for this with extreme organization.

Siegel's (1974) landmark book on learning disabled adults entitled The Exceptional Child Grows Up, states that the social/emotional characteristics may provide the real basis for similarity among learning disabled adults. They may all have different academic characteristics, but most will exhibit poor self concepts, social immaturity, and communication inadequacies in social situations.

Discussions concerning problems in visual memory, auditory memory, and visual figure-ground problems, continue to appear in the literature. However, the treatment of these processing problems in isolation is receiving less acceptance.

A Review of the Current Literature

As part of a two step process to establish a special student services program for the learning disabled adult at Anchorage Community College, a search of the current literature was conducted. The result of this search was an annotated bibliography on Adult Learning Disabilities. The sources for the bibliography included an ERIC search, a SMERIC search, graduate courses in learning disabilities and the Region X Adult Basic Education Consortium Workshop on learning disabled adults. The bibliography compiled 54 articles, books, pamplets, reports and speeches from these searches, selecting those identified by the descriptors "adult learning disabilities" and "adult learning problems" and published since 1970.

The listings in the bibliography are separated into the following six areas: college programs, case studies, basic skills programs, Adult Basic Education programs, research and longitudinal studies. The articles in the area of college programs state that the most recent programs tend to focus on both the social/emotional

problems and the academic problems of the learning disabled adult.

The case studies emphasis the need for public awareness. Two current books exemplify this: Eileen Simpson's (1979) Reversals: A Personal Victory Over Dyslexia and Louise Clarke's (1973) Can't Read, Can't Write, Can't Talk Too Good Either. Some case studies stress the importance of the social/emotional consequences of a learning disability illustrating how the learning disabled adult's problems affect his entire life including family, job, school and friends.

Several articles appeared in the area of basic skills and learning disabilities. These articles outlined ways to identify and remediate learning disabled adults in the college classroom. An area often overlooked by college teachers are the programs offered by Adult Basic Education for learning disabled adults. These programs are rich sources of remediation techniques.

The research articles describe controlled studies of learning disabled adults. These articles have been published primarily in medical journals. Recently, however, descriptive research has appeared in a variety of other journals.

The final category includes longitudinal or follow-up studies. There are a limited number of these studies in the field of learning disabilities. The methodology used in these studies appears to be faulty, including small samples, no control groups and questionable ways to measure success. The trends in these studies are difficult to discern. One follow-up study on remediation may report successful results while another describes remediation as an ineffective method for improving basic skills. The complete annotated bibliography is included in the appendix.

The Foundations Program Design

The Foundations Program is a comprehensive design to assist learning disabled adults in college. The goals of the program combine the concepts presented in the current literature regarding the definitions, characteristics and research findings concerning learning disabled adults. The six major goals of the Foundations Program are:

1. Each student will be treated as a individual with unique characteristics and problems.

2. A wholistic approach will be used with each student to assist in the solution of academic, social, emotional, physical and personal problems.

3. Grill's (1977) concept will be used to provide different services for the severely learning disabled and the mild or moderately learning disabled.

4. Each student will be intergrated into the entire college population.

5. The program personnel will create a supportive setting where each student can develop a positive self image and practice assertiveness training techniques.

6. Members of the faculty and staff will offer in-service workshops to promote understanding and support of the program.

In an effort to meet the diverse needs of learning disabled adults, the Foundations Program is composed of three major phases. These include a core of remedial/developmental courses available to learning disabled adults with severe learning problems, a large learning laboratory providing materials and personnel to assist adults with minimal learning problems, and a series of in-service

workshops for the entire college faculty and staff. The core remedial/developmental courses provides students with a complete diagnosis of academic and non-academic problems, an individual contract, and an interpersonal, individualized, and interdisciplinary team teaching approach to the basic areas of reading, mathematics, and communication. The methods of instruction include individual conferences, small group discussions, large group discussions, and laboratory experiences. The services integrated within the Foundations Program include a learning disabilities specialist, personal and academic counselors, a speech, hearing and language clinican, specialists for handicapped adults, peer tutors and a list of individuals and agencies who will provide supportive services.

The learning laboratory provides corrective instruction to adults with minimal learning problems by assisting them with specific short term objectives in the areas of mathematics, reading and communication. Adults using this laboratory have access to programmed material, college faculty in their area of need, an educational assistant responsible for the management of the learning laboratory, peer tutors, and all specialists available in the core courses.

The Foundations Program also offers a series of in-service workshops and conferences to all college faculty and staff. These workshops increase the staff's awareness of alternative teaching techniques, learning problems experienced by learning disabled adults, methods of integrating study skills into traditional content courses and the services and the philosophy of the Foundations Program. These workshops establish and maintain an open line of communication between the general faculty and the program personnel. The Foundations Program by providing these three phases establishes itself

an integral part of the college.

Conclusion

Take a moment to recall the adult you believed to be learning disabled. It is anticipated that this overview describing the most recent developments in the areas of definition, characteristics, and the current literature, as well as the description of the Foundations Program will provide you with the background needed to assist this adult and others you believe to be learning disabled on your campus.

Reference Notes

1. Brown, Donald. Diagnostic and Instructional Methods and Materials for Use with Learning Disabled Adults. Symposium presented at the three day Region X Adult Education Consortium Workshop on Adult Learning Disabilities, Portland, Oregon, December 1979.
2. Coles, Gerald S. Identification and Diagnosis of Learning Disabilities. Symposium presented at the three day Region X Adult Education Consortium Workshop on Adult Learning Disabilities, Portland, Oregon, December 1979.
3. Parker, Michael S. Results of Needs Assessment on the Learning Disabled Adult. Unpublished needs assessment survey, ABE/LD - TV Project, Bloomington, Indiana, 1978.

References

Clarke, Louise, Can't Read, Can't Write, Can't Talk Too Good Either. New York: Penguin Books, 1973

Grill, J. Jeffery, Identification of Learning Disabled Adolescents. Academic Therapy, 1977, 13, 23-28.

Siegel, Ernest, The Exceptional Child Grows Up. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1974.

Simpson, Eileen, Reversals: A Personal Account of Victory Over Dyslexia. Boston: Houghton - Mifflin, 1979.

Appendix 12

Annotated Bibliography of the Literature on Adult Learning Disabilities

Adults with learning disabilities are becoming an increasing concern of most college faculty. Colleges are realizing that educational goals for learning disabled youth do not necessarily end with high school graduation; for some, a college education is not an unrealistic goal. The philosophy of higher education has changed from education of the elite few to education of the masses. Today, society has charged higher education with the responsibility of educating anyone who wishes to walk through the open door. Similar to other community colleges, Anchorage Community College provides many services to its students. However, despite these efforts, the learning disabled adult is not being adequately served.

Who are these learning disabled adults? What services should the college provide? How should a program for these students be developed? To answer these questions and others, the area of learning disabilities needed to be researched. The result of this research is the attached annotated bibliography.

This bibliography was not designed to list all articles or books published on adult learning disabilities. Specific parameters had to be set, with one limitation being a focus on current literature published since 1970. Most of the literature on adult LD's is that recent, with earlier literature treating learning disabilities as the same problem in children as in adults. Definition, diagnosis, characteristics, and remediation were the same for a six year old child and a thirty six year old adult. Furthermore, the literature before 1970 used different terminology, and also seems dated in the light of recent research and findings. Walking the balance beam, for instance, was a popular remediation technique in the 1960's, until research studies pointed out the uselessness of that exercise in isolation.

Another parameter used was a limitation of terms. In both the Educational Research Institute Clearinghouse (ERIC) search and the San Mateo Educational Research Clearinghouse (SMERC) search, the identifiers used were "adult learning disabilities" and "adult learning problems." A review of the literature soon brought to light that there are as many terms for LD as there are articles. Learn-Disability was a term coined by Dr. Sam Kirk in 1963 and widely used by educators who are looking at academic, social-emotional, and processing deficits of an individual. The term "learning problems" shows up in articles which are including a larger percentage of the population and a more inclusive definition. Specific Language Disability (SLD) is used by Orton-oriented people who are looking at

academic deficiencies in reading, writing, or spelling. Minimal Brain Damage (MBD) shows a medical orientation; it was generally replaced in educational fields by the term LD about 1963. Articles written for Adult Basic Education (ABE) often refer to these students as functionally illiterate or high risk--which may be different than LD but seem to often refer to much the same thing. Several of the more recent articles refer to developmental dyslexia, a term that shows a medical orientation, an Orton orientation, and emphasis on reading disabilities. Speech pathologists use the term aphasic and are more research oriented than many of the other areas. Confusion over the definition and description of LD is clearly rampant in the field. It would be fruitful to do another ERIC search using all of these terms.

A third parameter was a limitation of sources. The sources of information utilized in this study include an ERIC search that came up with 141 articles, a SMERC search, the University of Alaska, Anchorage library, the University of Washington library, a 3-day Region X Adult Education Consortium work session on adult learning disabilities in December 1979, and graduate courses on learning disabilities at UAA.

The bibliography in final form includes 54 articles, pamphlets, books, project reports and speeches. These generally fell into six categories: descriptions of college programs, case studies, basic skills and LD, LD programs that are ABE oriented, research studies, and longitudinal or follow-up studies. The one common thread running through a majority of the articles was a statement near the beginning bemoaning the lack of other articles or research into this area.

This bibliography is an attempt to provide a useful and objective review of the current literature on adult LD. College faculty interested in adult LD can hopefully go on to the next steps of program implementation--identifying college LD students, finding materials, setting up programs, and planning faculty awareness workshops.

DESCRIPTIONS OF COLLEGE PROGRAMS

The descriptions of college programs are currently popular; many of the newest articles fall into this category. Several generalizations can be made about this category.

(1) The newer college LD programs tend to be oriented to social-emotional problems as well as academic problems; counselors and the counseling center are integral parts of the LD programs.

(2) The majority of the college LD programs are evaluated and based on subjective data rather than research. If standardized tests don't prove the validity of the program, glowing reports by students are used to substantiate it. Since little to no research has been done on the characteristics of adult LD, students are identified as LD by circuitous and subjective methods. The same applied for materials and program implementations.

(3) Secondary programs that have application to college programs must be perused. The September 1977 issue of Academic Therapy is entirely devoted to secondary programs and LD, and many of the articles are included in this bibliography.

(4) ERIC had some of the most detailed descriptions of college programs--staffing, program organization, format of instruction, characteristics of students, remediation techniques.

DEWITT, FRANCES BORUM. "Tear off the Label: The Older Student and SLD," Academic Therapy, 13 (September 1977), 69-78.

Reviews problems of identification of older SLD student, explaining that you need a parent statement, cumulative folder, attendance record, and academic psychological testing. Sets up criteria to look for from each of these sources. Tells how to set up a program--scheduling, grouping, location, teachers, compensation techniques.

DEWITT, FRANCES BORUM. Our Educational Challenge: Specific Learning Disabled Adolescent. San Rafael, California: Academic Therapy Publications, 1977.

Gives specific suggestions for helping the SLD adolescent--ways to identify, how to keep profile sheets, remediation (including a balance board, walking a rail, etc.), and techniques for use of materials and equipment (use tapes for basic sight words, neurological impress, record an experience and then write and edit it, spelling and reading techniques, and use of Controlled Reader).

FINNELL, SARA AND JOHN FLANDERS. "Against the Odds: College Success for Underachieving Students," paper presented at annual meeting of American College Personnel Association, Denver, Colorado, March 1977, ED 145348.

Investigates success for a program of developmental activities for high risk students at Tennessee Technological University. Program included lots of study skills and human relations training. Studies characteristics of these students. After one year of the program, found better study habits but no change in personality or attitude tests. Students, however, gave positive feedback about the program and had more realistic expectations and goals.

GOODMAN, LIBBY AND LESTER MANN. Learning Disabilities in the Secondary School: Issues and Practices, New York: Grune and Stratton, 1976, 123-132.

Recommends college education for some, not all, LD youth and reports on the too-few, too-experimental college programs now in existence for adult LD's. Describes college LD programs at College of the Ozarks, University of Plano, Westminster College, Curry College, Wright State University, and DeAnza College.

GRILL, J. JEFFREY. "School Programming for Adolescents," Academic Therapy, 13 (March 1978), 389-399.

Contends that educational services for secondary LD should be mandated and there should be two major groups--(1) mild/moderate LD and (2) severe LD. Services for these two groups should include evaluation, counseling. education, and advocacy--and should be provided in resource room settings for mild/moderate and in self-contained settings for severe.

HAIG, JOAN. "The Curriculum of the Community College and the Learning Disabled Student," an unpublished research project abstract, Fall 1978.

Covers who LD students are--definition, techniques used to identify, characteristics, and specific needs. Delves into community college philosophies and describes the needs and design of one community college program. Examines other programs and explores research on the adult LD.

HERBERT, MARY ALICE AND CAROL CZERNIEJEWSKI. "Language and Learning Therapy in a Community College (Community College of Alleghany County, Pennsylvania)," article in An Interdisciplinary Journal of Specific Language Disability, Volume 26, Orton Society, Towson, Maryland, 1976, ED 163453.

Describes a community college program which 500 students use each semester (only 30 professionally diagnosed as LD). Staffed by reading, writing, math, and science teachers who work individually with students, 2 part-time professional tutors in skills areas, a part-time psychologist, a part-time LD diagnostician-therapist, a full-time counselor, a full-time peer tutor trainer and supervisor, and a corps of peer tutors. Lists characteristics (confusion with structural endings and short vowel sounds, slow reader, poor speller, unable to take notes, difficulty forming generalizations and using details, word omission, redundancy in sentence construction, etc.) and problems with study skills (problems memorizing, tying together, taking essay tests, shifting reading skills from subject to subject). Concludes with 4 main syllabication principles.

LERNER, JANET W., MARY ANN EVANS, AND GERTRUDE MEYERS. "LD Programs at the Secondary Level: A Survey," Academic Therapy, 13 (September 1977), 7-19.

Gives comprehensive overview of the problem of LD at secondary level, delivery of services at secondary level, role of education specialists, a survey of specialists at secondary level, and materials. Annotated bibliography of eleven books and twelve articles.

LOMBARDI, JOHN. "An ERIC Review: Developmental Education: A Rapidly Expanding Function," Community College Review, 7 (Summer 1979), 65-71.

Theorizes that developmental education programs (pre-transfer, handicapped, remedial and ABE) will grow to 50% of the community college enrollment within the next decade. States that handicapped get boost because of Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and availability of funds. Hard to tell yet about faculty attitudes, and program effectiveness will be hard to evaluate because of range of ability in handicapped.

MARSH, GEORGE E., CAROL KOZISEK GEARHEART, AND BILL R. GEARHEART. The Learning Disabled Adolescent. St. Louis: The C.V. Mosby Company, 1978.

Gives overview of LD, stages of adolescence, and secondary schools. Covers the components of a secondary program, with an especially good list of ways for the classroom teacher to accomodate or compensate for LD youth. Bemoans lack of information on college programs for LD. Points out the college directory of LD programs that seems to indicate there are many, but two follow-up studies (Wells in 1973 and May in 1977) have discredited that idea. Dearth of formal programs but many caring faculty who are making a difference. Gives five reasons for shortage of college programs (costly, college not mandatory or perceived as essential, traditional concern for academic excellence, few funds available from PL94-142, and lack of awareness on part of many college program personnel).

MEDSKER, LELAND L. AND DALE TILLERY. Breaking the Access Barrier. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1971.

Presents statistics and studies of community colleges and disadvantaged students. Claims higher number of disadvantaged students go to community colleges than to other types of institutions, 50% attrition rate after first year, and 20% of faculties against any remedial courses (in a 1967 study).

MORELAND, WILLIAM H. "The Fly in the Ointment or Why Couldn't They Just Have Left Things As They Were; The Compensatory Effort in Higher Education," paper presented at annual meeting of Western College Reading Association, Anaheim, California, March 1975, ED 110966.

States that there are many LD students, students who have experienced difficulty in process of language acquisition, students who are good in some areas and bad in others. Because of open-door policy, LD adults are appearing in colleges. Need to get away from text-centered lectures and have programs organized which involve learning labs with diagnosis, remediation, counseling, and tutoring. Need varied format of instruction. Discusses program at Richland College, including cognitive mapping, tutors, faculty adaptations, and study skills.

NELSON, GRETA. "A Proposed System for Developing Individualized Educational Programs for Learning Disabled Adults at Vancouver Community College, King Edward Campus," paper presented at the World Congress on Future Special Education, Scotland, June 1978, ED 158521.

Prognosis for adult LD not as poor as expected because of (1) adult insight and (2) economic motivation. Discusses set-up of program for adult LD at VCC, including goals (special classes, diagnosis, help for content instructors), short-term perspectives, long-term perspectives, suggested tests, and how to set up a program for a nine-to-five day for LD specialist.

SCHOOLFIELD, W. ROY. "Limitations of the College Entry LD Model," Academic Therapy, 13 (March 1978), 423-432.

States we are doing a disservice to many LD adolescents by having secondary LD programs geared for college entry. Hurts those who may not be suited for college, and too many colleges aren't prepared for LD students anyway.

SIEGEL, DOROTHY. "Help for Learning Disabled College Students," American Education, 15 (July 1979), 17-21.

Describes the Learning Opportunities Center set up at Kingsborough Community College to bring emotional, social, and learning satisfaction to LD college students. Services include individual and small-group tutoring, counseling, direct classroom intervention, faculty orientation and consultation, and bypass technques and materials. Serves LD students and those with learning disorders caused by emotional problems. Discusses bypass techniques, faculty workshops and ways to get to faculty informally, social get-togethers, a student "hot line" for study problems, intake conferences, tutoring, and diagnosis.

TARVER, SARA G. "Viewing LD at the University Level," Focus on Exceptional Children, (Fall 1979).

Outlines an approach used at University of Wisconsin-Madison to setting up a program for LD students. Included a place on registration forms for students to identify themselves as LD--and eight did. These eight outlined their program needs and contributed coping and compensatory techniques that had worked for them. This list of coping techniques typed and made available for future LD students. Discusses special services or equipment needs, and lists a 3-pronged approach to establishing a program--(1) guidelines for identifying and diagnosing, (2) provision of special equipment and services, and (3) education of faculty and staff.

TUSCHER, MELVIN AND OTHERS. "West Valley College Comprehensive Plan for Special Education, 1977-78," Saratoga, California, 1977, ED 146956.

Details a comprehensive plan for providing special programs and services for students with communication, learning, and physical disabilities. Covers philosophy, needs assessments, proposed programs and services (identification of student population and program service descriptions), program goals, objectives and related activities, coordination of resources, in-service training, evaluation plan, and budget summary. Programs include: learning services, speech-language-hearing program, learning efficiency assistance program, re-entry program, counseling, and counselor/enabler services.

UGLAND, RICHARD AND GAIL DUANE. "Serving Students with Specific Learning Disabilities in Higher Education--A Demonstration Project at Three Minnesota Community Colleges," November 1976, ED 135434.

Describes and evaluates a program to locate LD students, to identify their special learning problems, and to help them succeed in their academic programs. Started with 150 college students and 77 community referrals. Primary problems identified were deficits in reading, writing, and spelling. Diagnosis included basic skills, study skills, cognitive style, emotional stability, and academic and vocational goals. Prescriptive services included basic skills classes, course content tutoring, consultation with instructors, social and vocational services, and student-made materials.

WEBER, ROBERT E., ED. Handbook on Learning Disabilities. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974, Foreward, Chapters 9, 11, 12.

Chapter 9 is "Post-Secondary Problems: An Optimistic Approach." Describes life adjustment, a new habilitation approach with adjustment centers and group homes.
Chapter 11 is "The Brain-Injured Adult: An Overlooked Problem." Stresses the complexity of the problem in adults, the elaborate coping and compensatory cover-ups, and the involvement of the total personality. Lists characteristics of MBD.
Chapter 12 is "The Neurologically Impaired Youth Goes to College." Describes the Curry College program for adult LD's.

WINNBERG, HELEN AND BETTY A. HARE. "Services for Learning Disabled Students in Elementary and Secondary School," Academic Therapy, 13 (September 1977), 57-62.

Cites several studies done in Pennsylvania which suggest that Pennsylvania LD students aren't receiving adequate educational services at the secondary level. LD as an umbrella term further confuses the problem. Research is needed to follow LD children and see if learning problems decrease or if they're considered symptoms of other problems. Cites a 1971 study of Pennsylvania institutions of higher learning which shows a lack of knowledge of both the problem of adult LD's and of methodologies necessary to help them learn.

CASE STUDIES

Case studies are another popular area now. The literature is filled with these readable, entertaining tales--only a portion of which are represented here. This reflects the newness of this whole field of adult LD, where the emphasis in the literature is still on building public awareness instead of controlled experimental studies. This popular approach is exemplified by two current books that provide easily-read, informative accounts of adult LD (Clarke in 1973 and Simpson in 1979).

Another emphasis found throughout the case studies is the importance of social/emotional consequences. The adult LD's problems will affect family relationships, teacher relationships, and friendships.

Finally, several of the case studies point out unlimited possibilities for success despite LD, especially in Thompson's study of eminent men with LD.

CLARKE, LOUISE. Can't Read, Can't Write, Can't Talk Too Good Either. New York: Penguin Books, 1973.

Follows the story of Louise Clarke's son, Michael, from ages 2 to 20, describing how his dyslexia affected his life and his schooling at each step. Book is subtitled, "How to recognize and overcome dyslexia in your child." Mike eventually succeeds and gets the Ph.D. he wants, but the author outlines the mistakes they make, the compensatory techniques he has to use (a typewriter instead of handwriting, more time for tasks, etc.), and what approaches and therapies are available now. A most readable success story.

COX, SHERALYN. "The Learning Disabled Adult," Academic Therapy, 13 (September 1977), 79-86.

Presents two case studies of adult LD's to make the points that remediation required identification (including public education so self-diagnosis is possible), individualization with adult LD as active member of remediation team, compensation with readers, typewriters, calculators, etc., and remediation of associated disorders (counseling).

GALE, JILL. "I Was Always the Last One Done," Teacher (December 1977), 56-58.

First-person account by a college sophomore of what it was like to attend a regular classroom as an LD child (with motor problems, thinking problems, and social problems). Stresses importance of warm and supportive teachers. Gives insights to the college teacher about what an LD adult has gone through and why they may carry over certain behaviors to college classes.

LENKOWSKY, L.K. AND D.T. SAPOSNEK. "Family Consequences of Parental Dyslexia," Journal of Learning Disabilities, 2 (January 1978), 47-53.

Presents case study of one 35-year old man who couldn't read or do math and how these disabilities affected his wife and two children. Problems in family involved secrecy (hiding his disability from everyone else), dependency (wife was responsible for tasks involving reading, writing, or math), almost constant tension, and emotional distance. Points out that many different disciplines should be aware of potential problems of adult LD's.

SCHWARTZ, MELVIN AND OTHERS. "Neuropsychological and Psychosocial Implications of Spelling Deficit in Adulthood: A Case Report," Journal of Learning Disabilities, 9 (March 1976), 144-148.

Presents case of a male machinist who, at age 43, first sought help for a life-long spelling disability. To compensate for his inability to write and his unsatisfying job, he read complex books and developed the facade of a scholar. Presents a battery of tests and what results they found. When subject found that remediation included lots of drill, he quit.

SIMPSON, EILEEN. Reversals: A Personal Account of Victory Over Dyslexia. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1979.

First-person account of what it's like to grow up dyslexic and, as an adult, the battle to realize strengths and get around disabilities. Orphaned at an early age, the author had many painful experiences in school, and would go home only to face screaming tutoring sessions with her aunt, who thrust books at her as if mere exposure would help. Author becomes a psychotherapist and writer. Interweaves factual information about dyslexia into story format, and explains how she came to terms with her dyslexia.

Success Stories of Adult Learning In America. National Advisory Council on Adult Education, December 1978, 1-3.

Cites a success story about Charles Rumble, an adult with LD who got his GED and is now a student at a community college. LD runs in his family, but as a child he was labelled "a retard." Always very good at working with mechanical things and at many skills that don't involve reading. At Mayo Clinic, finally found out he has dyslexia. Took GED by tape--and in the community college, his wife does all his reading for him. Shows tenacity, motivation, hard working attitude toward every job he has. Able to face his disability without bitterness.

THOMPSON, LLOYD J. "Language Disabilities in Men of Eminence," Journal of Learning Disabilities, 4 (January 1971), 39-49.

Presents the case histories of famous men who were probably language disabled: Edison, Harvey Cushing, Rodin, Patton, Woodrow Wilson, Paul Ehrlich, Einstein, Lawrence Lowell, George Washington, Brooke Adams, and William James.

BASIC SKILLS AND LEARNING DISABILITIES

Reading, writing, spelling and math are all areas affected by LD, and these articles present specific ideas for use in one or more of these areas. Using different identifiers in the computer searches would have most affected this area, where, for example, the term "developmental dyslexia" would have provided dozens of articles about reading skills.

These articles may not consider the whole LD adult (with social-emotional problems, or with strengths in some academic areas and weaknesses in others), but they frequently provide interesting insights into at least one aspect of the problem. These articles tend to outline specific ways to identify LD students in the classroom and specific remediation techniques. This category may be more helpful for content area teachers than some of the other areas.

DAVIS, VIVIAN. "Including the Learning Disabled Student in the College English Class," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, March 1975, ED 114823.

Reviews characteristics of college LD in reading, writing, and speaking/listening. Presents over nine possible causes for dyslexia, gives three suggestions for how to identify in a college composition class, and concludes with specific suggestions of what to do with adult LD's in a college composition class.

HEINZE, BETTY L. "First Ade for the Man or Gril Who Dose Not Spel Mutch: Fernald Revisited," paper presented at Eleventh Annual Meeting of Western College Reading Association, Long Beach, California, March 1978.

Reviews VAKT (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile) approach developed by Dr. Grace Fernald in the 1930's. Presents advantages of tracing and explanation of which parts of the brain are used with various spelling techniques. Goes through the steps of revised Fernald technique in great detail, from physical posture and motion of student, to size of word slips, how student traces, number and frequency of words presented, how to check.

RICHARDS, AMY. "Writing Dysfunction: A Problem in College Composition Classes," paper presented at annual meeting of Conference on College Composition and Communication," Kansas City, Missouri, March 1977, ED 158271.

Reviews symptoms of dysgraphia, a neurological dysfunction. Symptoms range from minor but persistent inability to spell to a major disarrangement of letters and syntax. Dysgraphics are often verbal, articulate, intelligent. Problems with writing may include anomolies in sentence structure and inconsistent use of capitals. Silent reading may be better than oral reading.

SILBERBERG, NORMAN AND MARGARET SILBERBERG. "And the Adult Who Reads Poorly?" Journal of Learning Disabilities, 11 (January 1978), 3-4.

Suggests that adult LD's face low self-image, pressures to improve, and barriers to rewards such as jobs. We need to change attitudes/awareness and change laws to provide money to programs for adult LD's. Deplores the fact that both training programs and hiring procedures often require a lot of reading that is NOT necessary for success on that job. Must realize that poor reader is not stupid, and pair non-reader with reader on the job.

TARNAPOL, LESTER AND MURIEL TARNAPOL. "Arithmetic Disability in College Students," Academic Therapy, 14 (January 1979), 261-266.

Cites data on 31 college students in a remedial arithmetic course at a community college. Concludes that arithmetic disabilities may occur in presence of deficits of visual figure-ground and visual-motor integration, and that the reverse may also be true. Hypothesizes that many of the same sensory learning modality deficits will be found to accompany arithmetic disabilities as are found with reading disabilities.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND LD

The fourth area, LD programs as part of Adult Basic Education, generally uses other terms than learning disabilities but provides a rich source of information for remediation techniques for adult LD's. Here is a source of materials and ideas that college teachers often overlook.

BRUNO, LOUIS AND OTHERS. Guidelines for Teaching the "Undereducated" Adult, published by Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Olympia, 1966, ED 012411.

Defines and discusses the problem of illiteracy in Washington. Appendix includes specific tips for teachers (e.g. lots of attention to short vowel sounds, very little testing, etc.), reading hints, spelling lists, and punctuation rules.

BURY, SUSAN. "A Replication Handbook for Learning Disabilities and the Institutionalized Adult (a 309 Project for Staff Development of ABE Personnel in Iowa)," June 1977, ED 134709.

Gives the agenda for a three-day workshop on adult learning disabilities, including definition and characteristics, diagnostic instruments, prescriptive teaching, use of tutors, and counseling. Details approaches to use in reading, hearing and speech, content areas, math, and creative thinking. Bury's handbook is detailed enough that someone else could almost give his own three-day workshop off this plan.

BURY, SUSAN. "Learning Disabilities and Adult Basic Education." Staff Development Project, 1976, ED 159137.

Plans an inservice workshop on adult learning disabilities for ABE teachers in Iowa. First stage is research and materials accumulation; second stage is to give workshops to train teachers in diagnosis and materials and teaching techniques. Overall plan laid out.

COLES, GERALD S., FRED CIPOREN, RHODA KONIGSBERG, AND BOAZ COHEN. "Educational Therapy in a Community Mental Health Center," Community Mental Health Journal (Spring 1980).

States that not enough attention has been given to psychosocial problems that tie in with adults' learning problems. Many ABE students need psychiatric help as well as literacy help. Describes an adult special education (ASE) program that is part of a community mental health program. Gives specific suggestions for psychosocial assessment and academic, problem-solving assessment. Concludes with research done over an 8-month period with this program, showing a 78% retention rate.

GLASS, J. CONRAD JR. AND LEE MCGRAW HOFFMAN. "Learning Disabilities in Adults," Community College Review, 4 (Summer 1976), 27-35.

Looks at a sample of research and writing on LD among economically disadvantaged groups so that the ABE teacher can use ideas. Discusses physiological and environmental factors, learning ability of disadvantaged adults, factors related to aging, and learning styles. Concludes with implications for ABE teacher--teach learning skills such as categorizing, steer away from standardized and timed tests, use redundancy, etc.

GRAVE, NANCY E. "Working with the Functionally Illiterate Adult," paper presented at annual meeting of International Reading Association Great Lakes Regional Conference, Cincinnati, Ohio, October 1978, ED 165104.

Categorizes differences between children and adults in a learning situation. Claims success with adult students mostly due to teacher and teacher's ability to use four components: love, student self-worth, fun, and student participation in making meaningful decisions.

"Recruitment and Training of Professionals to Work with Adults with Specific Language Disability So That They Might Become Employable or Promotable," by the Evening College of the John Hopkins University for the Maryland State Department of Education, 1976, ED 146488.

Describes and evaluates a 1975-76 educational and counseling program for near-illiterate adults who are unemployed or under-employed. Four phases of program included: (1) recruitment and training of professionals, (2) interviewing adult clients (publicity on newspaper, TV, radio, and with social agencies); accepted 49 who were reading below 3.5 grade level, had no severe emotional problems, and were motivated to attend class, (3) instructional program (counseling, basic job skills and reading skills), and (4) recommendations for future programs.

ROBERTS, BETTE H. AND SHELDON N. RUSSELL. "A Reading Portfolio of Functionally Illiterate Adults," an ABE Special Project for the Oklahoma State Department of Education, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, September 1976, ED 133699.

Conducted a project to identify reading behavior and instructional needs of functionally illiterate adults reading below a 4th grade level. Recommendations were made relative to testing, instruction, materials, inservice, and certification needs. Testing was high anxiety-producing, yet project concluded that diagnosis was important, as was setting objectives and using a variety of materials. Found current instructional materials for ABE inadequate.

ROSEN, PAMELA, ED. "Tests for Educationally Disadvantaged Adults," Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey, July 1973, ED 083318.

Presents an annotated bibliography of 65 tests for adults with only an elementary education or learning disabilities. All tests cited were published between 1925 and 1972.

RESEARCH

Everyone agrees on the need for more research about adult LD's, yet there are few studies available. If research refers to controlled studies with an experimental design that compares groups, characteristics, or some other limited aspect of adult LD, then the few studies that are available have questionable methodology. No research has been conducted on characteristics of adult LD, effectiveness of various aspects of adult LD programs, remediation techniques, or etiology. The medical field seems to be publishing more than education in this area, and descriptive research (Seymour, 1977) is beginning to appear more in the literature.

ANDRULIS, RICHARD AND JEANNE ALIO. "Preliminary Investigation into Learning Disabilities in Adults," paper presented at the 84th annual conference of American Psychological Association, Washington D.C., September 1976, ED 137664.

Reviews incidence of learning disabilities among children and adolescents and focuses on unanswered questions about adult LD--incidence, etiology, and diagnosis. Utilizes Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) in an adapted form to develop an adult diagnostic tool. Concluded that differences in modalities MAY provide a clue.

GRILL, J. JEFFREY. "Identification of Learning Disabled Adolescent," Academic Therapy, 13 (September 1977), 23-28.

Studies secondary programs with adolescents already identified as LD to see what criteria are used. Only 28% of identified LD adolescents met the following criteria: academic achievement in any area at or below 2nd grade, measured IQ of not less than 85, hearing and visual acuity normal, no severe emotional disturbance, and no chronic school attendance problem. Schools MAY be mislabeling, but these criteria also favor only severe LD.

HUESSY, HANS R. M.D. "The Adult Hyperkinetic," American Journal of Psychiatry, 131 (June 1974), 724-725.

Discusses drug treatments (with Tofranil) used with adult hyperkinetics. Studies show it causes improved self-control, control of temper outbursts, greater thoughtfulness, increased perseverance, and decreased impulsivity in some of the patients.

MANN, HENRY B. AND STANLEY I. GREENPASS. "The Identification and Treatment of Adult Brain Dysfunction," American Journal of Psychiatry, 133 (September 1976), 1013-1017.

Researches those with adult brain dysfunction (ABD) and claims they constitute

a distinct diagnostic entity who have attention problems and different personality and behavioral patterns. Discusses etiology, follow-up studies of hyperactive patients, difficulties with diagnosis. Concluded with two case studies which emphasize the problem of focusing attention and the use of a drug to alleviate the problem.

SEYMOUR, LILLIAN. "Recent Legislation: It Affects You!" Academic Therapy, 13 (September 1977), 53-56.

Explains, in easy to read terms, the provisions and implication of PL94-142 (mandates an education for ALL handicapped children, ages 3-21). Also covers PL94-482 (10% of vocational education funds be set aside for handicapped), Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (prohibits discrimination against handicapped persons), and PL 94-103 (Developmentally Disabled Assistance and Bill of Rights Act).

LONGITUDINAL AND FOLLOW-UP STUDIES

Tied in with the research studies are the longitudinal studies or follow-ups of adults who have been diagnosed as LD in childhood. This appears to be a promising area of research into adult LD that is just now being utilized and examined because of the recent history of the field. It wasn't until the last twenty years or so that children were being diagnosed as LD, and they are just now becoming adults that we can follow up. Ernest Siegel's book on adult LD's (1974) is one of the reasons it's a prominent issue now.

Again, however, methodology could be questioned on many of these studies (Herjanic, 1972). In fact, trends are hard to discern from the longitudinal studies because of weaknesses in the designs of the studies. Rawson (1968) reports glowing follow-up success stories, while Frauenheim (1978) concludes that remediation is NOT effective in changing basic skills. Relying on any one of these longitudinal reports could lead to results not substantiated by the other articles.

FRAUENHEIM, JOHN G. "Academic Achievement Characteristics of Adult Males Who Were Diagnosed as Dyslexic in Childhood," Journal of Learning Disabilities, 11 (October 1978), 476-483.

Studies forty adult males who were all diagnosed and treated as severe dyslexics 18-31 years before this follow-up study. Found that remediation not effective in changing reading, spelling, or arithmetic skills. Severe learning problems persisted--and were the same problems they had as children. Also found evidence that visual discrimination is accurate (they SEE the letters and words in a typical fashion)--rather that problem occurs at associational level.

HERJANIC, BARBARA M. AND ELIZABETH C PENICK. "Adult Outcomes of Disabled Child Readers," Journal of Special Education, 6 (Winter 1972), 397-410.

Reviews in detail nine adult follow-up studies of disabled child readers (from 1959-1968). Critiques previous investigations: samples small and not representative of typical school population, absence of control groups precludes generalizations about influence of childhood reading disorder on adult adjustment and makes it impossible to accurately assess long-term effects of remediation programs, narrow spectrum of indices designed to evaluate adult status, generally ignored other kinds of intervening situational events, and didn't differentiate between mild and severe disorders.

KASS, WALTER, LEATRICE SCHACT, AND MERVYN SCHACT. "Follow-up Note on a Case of LD Thirty Years Later," paper presented at Third International Scientific Conference of the International Federation of LD, Montreal, 1976, ED 135130.

Presents case study of one man in his mid-40's who was treated by the authors when he was 15-20. Earlier had been treated as a psychiatric problem, then discovered

organic brain dysfunction with a high verbal IQ (125-131) and low performance IQ's (59-68). Has now started work on his doctorate, teaches at a small western college, and lives alone.

LEWIS, RICHARD S. The Other Child Grows Up. New York: Times Books, 1977.

States that 25 years of follow-up have proven that given a program of special education that understood and treated his learning disability, the "other child" could mature as an independent, capable adult. Makes a case for early intervention and remediation. Presents a follow-up study that shows that IQ can be increased by environmental stimulation and discusses several follow-up studies of students from Cove School or from teachers trained at Cove School. Many subjective accounts of well-adjusted, functioning adults who are out earning a living.

RAWSON, MARGARET B. Developmental Language Disability: Adult Accomplishments of Dyslexic Boys. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1968.

Cites longitudinal study of 56 boys, both dyslexic and non-dyslexic, which shows that dyslexic boys need not be considered poor risks for academic and vocational pursuits. Boys all came from a private school that concerned and well-to-do parents had founded, and all were treated with an Orton-based remedial approach. Glowing follow-up reports, especially educationally and vocationally (Ph.D's, lawyers, and doctors abound).

ROGAN, LAURA LEHTINEN AND LENORE HARTMEN. "A Follow-up Study of Learning Disabled Children as Adults. A Final Report," by Cove School Research Office, Evanston, Illinois, to Department HEW/BEH, December 1976, ED 163728.

Reports a follow-up study of 91 LD children who attended Cove School. To find the adult characteristics, used questionaires, interviews, WAIS, WRAT, and Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory. Found 60% employed, 15% married, 36% finished college, 8% finished graduate school. IQ scores increased, and reading, spelling and math scores ranked top to bottom in that order. Personality tests showed that the effects of learning problems on the personality are pervasive--low self-esteem, poor reaction to stress, difficulties with relationships.

SIEGEL, ERNEST. The Exceptional Child Grows Up. New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1974.

Proposes that poor self-concept, social immaturity, and communication inadequacies in social situations constitute the real basis for homogeneity among the older Minimal Brain Damage (MBD) group. Gives rationale for studying MBD adult, and says ultimate objective is success and not mere adjustment. In college, main problems encountered are inadequacy in independent functioning, poor work habits, poor decision-making abilities, deficiency in written expressions, inability to handle counter-culture pressures, and heightening of adolescent emotional probelms. Also details problems encountered in work, and discusses goals for MBD adult (psychological, social, educational, and vocational).